

## **CARES Monthly VISN Communication Report February 2003**

The VISN-level CARES Communication Report for February 2003 is summarized on the attached spreadsheets. The first spreadsheet contains the "Stakeholder Outreach" summary; the second spreadsheet includes the unsolicited input or inquiries received from the stakeholders and others, and the third contains the summary of substantive comments from the VISNs.

In summary, there were 1,104,158 stakeholders, veterans, and members of the public briefed on the CARES process. This represents a substantial increase of 666,891 stakeholders and veterans briefed as in January 2003. For this month, all VISNs submitted CARES Stakeholder Outreach information. Most of the VISNs used communication modes consisting of briefings, websites, e-mails and mailings (e.g., brochures, newsletters). Of the 960,008 Veterans & Relatives contacts, 250,252 or nearly 26.06% were from VISN 16, mainly in the form of newsletters, briefings and publications. Of the 114,507 Employee contacts, 19,204 or nearly 16.8% were from VISN 1. Of the 4,006 volunteer contacts, 1,730 or 43.2% were from VISN 3. Finally, of the 7,316 VSO contacts, 1,765 or 24.1% were from VISN 2 – mostly in the form of briefings.

Overall, of the 1,104,158 total stakeholders and veteran's contacts (other 16,093 or nearly 1.45% were in the form of mail outs (e.g., e-mails, brochures, newsletters,).

The February analysis showed that the outreach activities reported with the Affiliates, Unions, Local Organizations and DoD continue to decrease from the previous month.

Concerns continue to be voiced in the majority of the VISNs focused on the overall CARES process (i.e., Congressional involvement, funding, and impact), employee anxiety, potential closures, and special populations. In meetings with national VSO representatives at the VHA-VACO levels, a concern continues to be voiced that there has been insufficient contact to local, state, and regional VSO representatives regarding the **specific resolution of** the CARES planning initiatives.

Additionally, of the 1,104,158 total stakeholders contacts, 84 or .0760% were face-to-face outreach contacts, and the contacts increased from 77 in January to 84 in February.

Several areas were identified for improvement in the communication reporting process. These are summarized below.

# CARES Outreach Monthly Report

ALL VISNs	February	2003
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Outreach Audience											
VISN	Employee	Veteran/Rel	Congressional	VSO	Affiliate	Volunteer	Union	Local Org	DoD	Other	Total
0											0
1	19204	244826	171	638	38	1	50	29	5	10	264972
2	1900	0	6	1765	0	413	0	90	0	8	4182
3	11737	239916	106	873	97	1730	86	88	18	4	254655
4	12266	5200	158	385	15	2	6	0	0	767	18799
5	12568	200	47	93	1	30	5	0	7	0	12951
6	7552	159200	17	865	5	290	10	9	6	7	167961
7	3848	484	26	226	4	145	14	105	20	38	4910
8	1854	20	13	95	0	0	0	50	0	25	2057
9	2316	101	5	217	11	65	3	0	0	4	2722
10	10813	0	57	163	25	128	3	33	2	36	11260
11	2652	0	19	71	11	12	33	30	2	3	2833
12											0
15	1177	2	61	108	22	80	11	22	6	14	1503
16	263	250252	10	253	5	55	3	20	0	15003	265864
17	5650	3000	2	44	13	100	0	0	20	10	8839
18	70	0	1	9	0	39	0	0	0	0	119
19	575	1036	6	227	2	200	7	8	3	10	2074
20	3723	55441	6	228	3	76	12	0	29	0	59518
21	5725	2	0	90	21	588	32	128	0	8	6594
22	545	302	31	123	0	1	15	1	0	0	1018
23	10069	26	152	843	9	51	29	0	2	146	11327
	114507	960008	894	7316	282	4006	319	613	120	16093	1104158

# ALL VISNs February 2003

Contacts															
VISN	Employee	Veteran/Rel	Senator	Representative	VSO	Affiliate	Volunteer	Union	Local Org	DoD	State Gov	Local Gov	Media	Other	Total
0															0
1	1	1			2										4
2	1	3					1								5
3	2				4				2				1	1	10
4	1		1	2	3									1	8
5	1													2	3
6		3	1	1	2					1					8
7	3			2	3									1	9
8															0
9					2									1	3
10	3									1			2		6
11															0
12															0
15	1														1
16															0
17					1										1
18	1				1									3	5
19	2	2			3		1								8
20	1		1												2
21		1		2	2								1		6
22				1	3										4
23					1										1
	17	10	3	8	27	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	4	9	84

## Summary of Substantive Comments for all the VISNs

From: February / 2003

To: February / 2003

Facility	Who	What they said	Action taken / Impact on plan
Alaska HCS	Nicholas Abramczyk, Legislative Aide for Senator Murkowski	Inquiring where our proposed Consturction project fits into the CARES process	Information given by 00. No impact on plan
Amarillo, TX	No contacts were made in January 2003		
Asheville, NC	Greenwood Edney, Staffer from Congressman Charles Taylor's Office	Mr. Christian provided Mr. Edney information regarding Timetable for CARES.	Continued development of CARES Market Plan
Cincinnati, OH	Luke Saladin	asked questions re: EU of FTD property	positive article run 2/25
Dublin, GA	Tom Cook, AL VISN 7 CARES Rep	Looking for Dublin specific CARES info	Added to our mail list
Dublin, GA	Mary Ferguson, Manager, Congressman Sanford Bishop's Albany office	Requested further explanation of Small Facility PI; worried about impact on Dublin VA and Albany CBOC	Provided additional info; assured no impact on Albany CBOC.
Dublin, GA	Peggy Greenway, Congressman Jim Marshall's Macon office manager	Requested additional info on PI for Dublin and further explanation	Provided info and answered questions
Dublin, GA	Employee requested anonymity	Worried about hospital closing	Assured employee hospital would not close; provided additional explanation and info
Dublin, GA	Housekeeper	Requesting info	Info provided
Hampton, VA	Captain Munter, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth	Expressed appreciation for the information shared	None
Honolulu, HI	Rep. Ed Case	Asking for information on the Cares Process.	Response drafted.
Long Beach, CA	Christopher Minakowski	How would CARES affect veterans in 46th district	Provide inital information on CARES and current dead lines
Minneapolis, MN	Ray Boeckman	Expressed concern with proposed locations of CBOCs, stated there was a previously approved location for a CBOC in Hayward and this location is not on the proposed plan.	Will bring the issue to the subgroup working on the planning initiatives dealing with CBOCs for evaluation.
Mountain Home, TN	Representative John Duncan; Bob Griffiths-Chief of Staff; Jennifer Stansberry-Staffer	Rep. Duncan requested a briefing on CARES and specifically the Eastern Market. He was very pleased to see the planning Mountain Home had done to include the Knoxville area. He was supportive of possible change of leadership from Nashville Medical Center to Mountain Home because he felt most of his constituents get their care at Mountain Home.	We agreed to keep their office apprised of any updates.

Northern California Health Care System, Martinez, CA	Congressman Wally Herger	...VA notes that the demand for primary care in the Redding catchment area is expected to grow by less than 5% over the next decade. Inasmuch as the demand for primary care in the Redding catchment area has skyrocketed by 50% in the past 3 years, I am concerned that the VA's current projection is based on a seriously flawed assessment. I would appreciate a full explanation of the model used to arrive at the conclusion that patient visits in the Redding area will grow by less than 5% by 2012.	We are working with the local CARES planning office to develop a response to this question.
Philadelphia, PA	Woody Anglade - Chief of Staff	Inquiry into expansion of Gloucester County NJ treatment Site and concern over waiting times, staffing and expansion options. Unofficial CBOC. Explained that moratorium exists for new CBOC proposals, and awaiting CARES for decision of Gloucester County future. Suggested telephone conference to discuss the detail.	Follow up Phone call 2/21/03
Philadelphia, PA	Woody Anglade - Chief of Staff, Staffer Amy Zimmerman - Staff for Congressman Robert Andrews (D-NJ-1)	Explained history of Gloucester Clinic. Explained that moratorium exists for new CBOC proposals, and awaiting CARES for decision of Gloucester County future. Explained briefly CARES timeline for approved. Agreed to share once public the Eastern VISN Planning Initiatives which preliminarily recommend formalization of Gloucester CBOC. Explained obstacles, driving time, SC/NSC ration, Category 8 decision. Described positives, lower income, lack of Public transportation, free space and dedicated staff at Gloucester. Explained current situation in Levittown. Mr. Anglade inquired whether Congressman should try to get the Congressman involved "politically" I explained I did not personally think that would be helpful at this point in time. Agreed to continue to share CARES data (already on CARES Constituent Listings) and provide subtenant updates. Conversation lasted approx 20 minutes	Continue to Update
Salisbury, NC	Marcelle Williams	That he thought VISN 6 was the only VISN involved in CARES	EA/Director explained the national CARES Picture to Mr. Williams.

Southern Arizona HCS	National Commander for the American Legion and Delegation. 20 Attended.	Neutral - Informational purposes.	None
Southern Arizona HCS	VSO District VI Representative Mr. Jay Vargas and local SAVAHCS VSO Representatives. A total of 18 in attendance.	Neutral - Informational purposes only.	Neutral - Info. only
Southern Arizona HCS	VSO Representatives, Commanders, Congressional Liaison Offices, a total of 350 newsletters reflected CARES website for informational purposes.	Neutral - Informational purposes only.	None - Informational purposes only.
Southern Arizona HCS	SAVAHCS Care Line Chiefs - A total of 25 were given VHA Now Newsletter with current CARES Phase II Initiatives	Neutral - Informational purposes only.	None - Info only
VISN 17 Office	Donald Simons, The American Legion National Historian and VISN 17 American Legion CARES POC	Continuing to request information on behalf of National Commander Ron Conley. The information we are providing is benign, but we gather from his comments that the Legion is arguing that attention should be on immediate needs rather than needs in out-years. Every time we explain the CARES projections out to 2012 he doesn't appear to be interested; he wants to know what we're going to do "next week"	The credibility of the CARES process will suffer unless we can show veterans that it is more than a "long range" plan. A lot of the guys feel they won't be around in 10 years and they're not particularly interested in something that will occur after they've gone. Probably a little selfish, but that's the reality.
VISN 21 Office	Leo Delay, Commander, VFW Post 9650, Anderson, California	Neglecting needs of Redding veterans. Contract 10 beds for emergent services & increase Redding OPC services by building new structure.	Written response from Network Director. Explained enrollment data and provided information on the current contract with a local medical center for inpatient emergency beds.
VISN 22 Office	Jesse James Morales	Wanted to meet to discuss a letter he sent to American Legion Leadership regarding CARES.	Meeting set for 2/27/03

VISN 22 Office	Jesse James Morales, American Legion, Network 22 Point of Contact	He provided a copy of a letter which was sent to Patricia Orsino, Director for Health Care - American Legion in Washington DC raising concern about reducing vacant space and land at the Greater Los Angeles and Long Beach facilities. His concern is that it will be lost to future veteran needs. He also expressed concern that CBOCs have not be adequately marketed to attract area veterans. As a result, some are failing and may close in the future.	A land use planning process with criteria will be submitted as part of the Market Plan for the excess land PI.
VISN 22 Office	William Bo Rollins, PVA Point of Contact for Network 22	Discuss the new CARES special population data especially the SCI data that shows the need to convert acute beds to LTC beds in the California Market.	This was the first time he had heard of the data and would study it and get back to us with his comments.
VISN 3 Office	VISN 3 Senior Management and CARES Leadership	VISN 3 V-Tel and onsite demonstration/training of the IBM planning model to understand the process in order to better develop planning initiatives solutions at the local level.	Educational/Informational -- numerous comments were made and discussion related to the product resulting by entering this data into the IBM Planning model.
VISN 3 Office	Dr. Hammond - Senior Leadership of VISN 3	Discussed SCI planning scenarios as recommended in the updated VACO PI information.	Coordinating contact with VISN 2 & 4 to discuss referral patterns and SCI issues.
VISN 3 Office	John Ward - National Field Director, PVA	Wanting information/data on SCI/SCD patients on registry within VISN 3 - current outpatients.	Pursuing providing information.
VISN 3 Office	Kathy Hrvatin	Kathy called to understand the conversion of BDOC to the number of beds for comparison to the projected bed numbers forecasted by the Milliman Model. I shared with her the conversion for acute and NHC beds. She also was interested in any news related to the SCI data or PI's coming out, I shared with her that the data rerun is expected early the week of 2/10 but was uncertain on the SCI or LTC information. She had heard the 15th which is a Sat, and Monday was a holiday, so we probably wouldn't see the information until 2/17. She also asked if I thought the VSO's would be able to get access to the IBM Planning Model. I shared with her that I had sent the request in, and let the VACO folks know that they would be receiving requests from the principal VSO's.	Provided conversion tables and shared updated information.

VISN 3 Office	Gerald M. Kelly, Executive Director	Requesting to meet with VISN's 2, 3 and 4 related to the SCI data and planning initiatives released.	Plan on meeting with the EPVA, scheduled discussions with VISN's 2 and 4.
VISN 3 Office	Dennis O'Connell, BVA	Are there any special clinics for deaf Veterans?	<p>Dr. Gonzenbach, Chief Audiology &amp; Speech provided a reply: For veterans with all degrees of hearing impairment, local VA audiology clinics are equipped to handle their needs. This would include diagnostics, rehabilitation, hearing aid services and/or assistive listening devices. For veterans who have profound hearing loss and are candidates for cochlear implants, there are several centers around the country which handle the surgical and rehabilitation aspects of this highly specialized, but limited demand, care process (VA NYHHS is one of those centers).</p> <p>CARES data projections show expected increases in the number of veterans to be served with hearing loss. This is reasonable, given the increased incidence of hearing loss with aging. Historically there have not been special disability clinics devoted to veterans with profound hearing loss. This is reasonable as most all local clinics can manage the hearing rehabilitation needs of hearing impaired veterans.</p> <p>Stephen Gonzenbach, Ed.D., Chief Audiology &amp; Speech Pathology</p>
VISN 4 Office	7 form letters with signatures from members of the Vernango County Veterans Coalition	Thanked Network Director for response from him, in response to letter they sent to the Secretary. Thanked him for forwarding their request for a new CBOC in Venango Co. to the Network CARES Taskforce	Request will be considered by taskforce.
VISN 4 Office	Bill Dozier, DC office, VFW	Requested information related to long term care beds for network, and enhanced use project for Butler VAMC listed in the federal register	Provided information, made arrangements for contact with project manager at Butler VAMC, will continue to work with Mr. Dozier to provide information he requests.
VISN 6 Office	Ron Conley, National Commander, American Legion	At the NC state Legion conference, Mr. Conley stated that Legion is not involved in CARES market plan process. (Summary of Commander's public comments were sent to NCPO).	VISN 6 communications coordinator gave examples of how VSO's are involved; Legion members also gave examples.
VISN 6 Office	Charlotte Moreland, Legislative Assistant	Wants updated info on CARES for meeting with VSO's, particularly about Beckley, Richmond, Salem, and any discussion between VISN 6 and VISN 9.	Will e-mail her the latest VISN 6 CARES update.



VISN 7 Office	Tom Cook, VISN 7 POC, American Legion	Wanted names and phone numbers of facility-level CARES POCs so he can contact them.	Provided contact information as requested.
VISN 7 Office	4 GAO staff members met with the Atlanta Network Director and VISN 7 CARES Coordinators. This was their "entrance meeting" to discuss their plan to prototype VISN CARES process reviews with an initial review in VISN 7. They plan additional meetings with us, and site visits to all VISN 7 facilities. They will then go on to review the CARES process in all VISNs.		
White City, OR (Dom)	Employee	Requested CARES examine the ability for White City to EXPAND its Ambulatory Care capabilities.	Described Market Plan process, etc., to ensure an objective approach will be given such an issue.
Wilkes-Barre, PA	Staff Representative from Senator Spector's Scranton Office was given a status of the CARES process.	Status of the process was given; currently in phase 4 - alternatives to Planning Initiatives are being developed.	Senator Spector's Office will continue to be briefed.